

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for detecting a manipulation of a programmable memory device of a digital controller for a motor vehicle, comprising the steps of:

storing in the programmable memory device data and control programs for an operation of the digital controller and for a control/regulation of functions of the motor vehicle;

storing information regarding a programming/reprogramming operation in a separate memory area of the programmable memory device where only reading and programming are possible, the step of storing information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation being performed in conjunction with each programming/reprogramming operation of the programmable memory device; and

reading out and comparing a content of the separate memory area with another set of information in order to detect a manipulation.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing in the separate memory area information regarding a cumulative number of programming/reprogramming operations of the programmable memory device.

3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing in the separate memory area the information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation with each erase operation of the programmable memory device.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein:

the information regarding the programming/reprogramming is stored in the separate memory area by setting bits.

5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing the information regarding the programming/reprogramming in a one-time-programmable region of the programmable memory device, the programmable memory device being arranged as a flash memory.

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6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing in the separate memory area information from an external programming unit for programming/reprogramming a flash memory.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing in the separate memory area information from an arrangement of the digital controller for storing the information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation.

8. An external programming unit for at least one of programming and reprogramming a flash memory of a digital controller for a motor vehicle, comprising:

an arrangement for storing in the flash memory data and control programs for an operation of the digital controller and for a control/regulation of functions of the motor vehicle;

an arrangement for storing information regarding a programming/reprogramming operation in a separate memory area of the programmable memory device where only reading and programming are possible, the storing of the information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation occurring in conjunction with each programming/reprogramming operation of the programmable memory device;

an arrangement for reading out and comparing a content of the separate memory area with another set of information in order to detect a manipulation; and

storing in the separate memory area information from an external programming unit for programming/reprogramming the flash memory.

9. A digital controller for a motor vehicle, comprising:

a programmable memory device for storing data and control programs for an operation of the digital controller and for a control/regulation of functions of the motor vehicle;

an arrangement for storing information regarding a programming/reprogramming operation in a separate memory area of the programmable memory device where only reading and programming are possible, the storing of the information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation occurring in conjunction with each programming/reprogramming operation of the programmable memory device;

an arrangement for reading out and comparing a content of the separate memory area with another set of information in order to detect a manipulation; and

an arrangement for storing in the separate memory area information from an arrangement of the digital controller for storing the information regarding the programming/reprogramming operation.

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